

NSC BRIEFING

18 February 1954

THE 1 MARCH KOREAN REFUGEE EXCHANGE

- I. Neither North nor South Korea is expected to permit more than a few refugees to return home.
- A. Eligible repatriates include all civilians forced from their homes by the fighting since 1950.
 - B. Both sides claim the other is holding back qualified persons.
 - C. The exchange is likely to collapse amid mutual recriminations, possibly even in the preliminary interchange of rosters on 20 February.
- II. North Korean authorities originally announced that 8,000 southerners desired to return home.
- A. Subsequently, there were indications that the Communists would drastically reduce this figure.
 - B. Peiping Radio announced on 9 February that "few, if any" civilians of the other side were in North Korean territory.
 - C. Pyongyang Radio said on 14 February that "no Korean displaced civilians have registered as desiring to return home."
 - D. The Communist negotiators at Panmunjom insisted that the daily rate of exchange be revised downward from 500 to 100 per day.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

DOCUMENT NO. 26
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2000
AUTH: 1-3-80
DATE: 1-3-80 REVIEWER: 2000

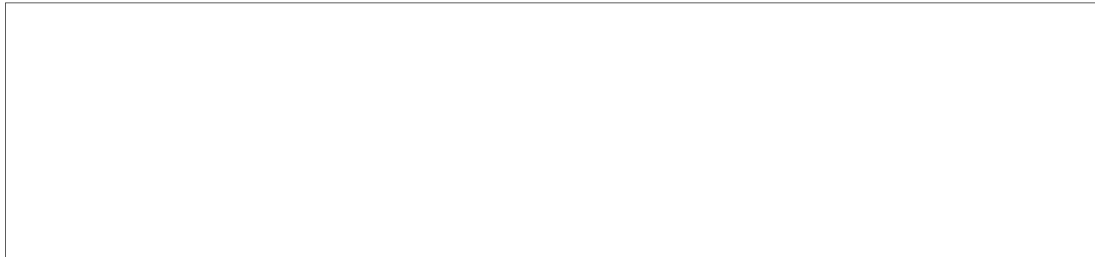
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E. The Communists may be laying propaganda groundwork for returning few or no Koreans and to attack the UNC for returning few North Koreans.

F. Pyongyang may merely use the exchange to return about 50 foreigners who have been detained in North Korea since the war began, or to send new espionage agents into South Korea.

III. While 15,000 of 800,000 North Koreans in the south are eligible for repatriation, Seoul claims that only 2,000 desire to do so.



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B. Rhee government officials have spoken publicly of the return of 200,000 South Koreans from the north, a figure far in excess of what South Korea could rehabilitate even if accurate.

C. The government has done nothing to cushion public shock when a much smaller number is actually returned.

D. South Korea apparently plans to build up public agitation over the issue.

E. Since the exchange immediately proceeds South Korea's legislative elections, it will offer Rhee a new pretext to discredit unification by negotiation.

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IV. While Pyongyang may return 27 South Korean legislators, some of whom went north with the Communists in 1950, it would probably choose a more unstable time to do so, such as after Rhee's death.

A. These legislators would try to capitalize on neutralist sentiment in the south.

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